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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 001409

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DEPT FOR NEA/ARP TREUTER, EB/ESC/TFS KLEAHY  
TREASURY FOR U/S SLEVEY, RLEBENSON, PHEFFERNAN, KHECHT  
FBI FOR TFOS MMOREHART, FWAIKURT  
DHS FOR ICE KDELACOLLI  
MANAMA FOR JBEAL  
NSC FOR FTOWNSEND, JZARATE, NSHAMPAIN

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TAGS: PTER KTFN AE

SUBJECT: PREPARING FOR 2ND U.S./UAE JTFCC

REF: A. ABU DHABI 1301

1B. ABU DHABI 409

Classified By: Ambassador Michele J. Sison for reasons 1.5 b and d.

11. (C) Summary. Ambassador met with UAE Central Bank Governor Sultan Nasser al-Suweidi on April 11 to discuss details of the upcoming U.S./UAE Joint Terrorist Finance Coordinating Committee (JTFCC) that will be held during Treasury U/S Stuart Levey's trip to the UAE on April 30. Al-Suweidi committed to having the meeting on the April 30 and assured Ambassador that he would work with all of the relevant ministries and Dubai organizations to be sure the right people are at the meeting. Al-Suweidi told Ambassador that his staff was preparing a paper to present at the upcoming Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)/EU meeting in Brussels on cash couriers. He also said his staff will be working with the Ministry of Social Affairs to be sure they understand the Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) Special IX Recommendations on terrorist financing and the Middle East North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENA/FATF) Best Practices Paper on charity regulation. This cable contains an action request, para 7. End Summary.

12. (C) In preparation for Treasury U/S Stuart Levey's April 29 - May 1 visit to the UAE, Ambassador and econoff met with Central Bank Governor Sultan Nasser al-Suweidi to seek his buy-in for holding a second round of the U.S./UAE JTFCC on April 30. Al-Suweidi confirmed that the meeting would be on the 30th and he undertook to be sure that all of the appropriate federal ministries and Dubai organizations are present. (Note: The afternoon of the 11th, the Director of the International Division of the Central Bank's Anti-Money Laundering and Suspicious Unit (AMLSHU), Ahmed al-Qemzi, called econoff to confirm that the JTFCC will be held at 11:00 am on the 30th, followed by a lunch. He said the Central Bank would be sending out invitations the next day to "be sure that everyone is prepared this time." End note.)

13. (C) Ambassador told al-Suweidi that the USG wants to focus the discussions on the topics of charity regulations and cash couriers. Al-Suweidi agreed that it would be useful to have in-depth discussions on these two issues. He told Ambassador that AMLSCU officials were in the process of drafting a paper on cash courier regulations that they will present at next week's GCC/EU meeting in Brussels. Ambassador observed that since Dubai Customs plays such an important role in

implementing the UAE's cash courier regulations, that it would be useful to have their input on the paper and attendance at the JTFCC. The Governor agreed and said that he will "convince" them to join the JTFCC meeting. (Note: Econoff will follow-up with al-Qemzi to get a copy of the cash couriers paper. End note.)

¶ 14. (C) Governor al-Suweidi told Ambassador that he considers the split of the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs into two separate ministries as a very positive development. He believes that the split will allow the new Ministry of Social Affairs (MSA) to focus more directly on issues like charity regulations. He told Ambassador that "to complement the USG's efforts on charity regulations" his team will be engaging directly with Minister of Social Affairs Mariam al-Roumi to make her aware of the requirements of the FATF IX Special Recommendations on terrorist financing and the MENA/FATF Best Practices Paper on charity regulation. "We will talk to her about the UAE's current system of charity regulation to see how it is set up, and to see what is not complete." He noted that the UAE "needs" to do this because it is a signatory to international conventions against terrorism and because the UAE aims to adhere to all FATF guidelines.

¶ 15. (C) Al-Suweidi is aware that the current regulatory system does not cover charities in all emirates, and he believes that the new MSA will be able to bring the emirates under the federal umbrella "where it comes to charities giving cross-border donations." He wants the MSA to work with each emirate because, "the IX Special Recommendations apply to the whole country, not just the federal level." (Comment: Ambassador met with Minister of Social Affairs Mariam al-Roumi on March 26 to discuss the UAE's system of charity regulation. Al-Roumi told Ambassador that the MSA regulated

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only those charities that applied to be licensed by the MSA (ie: charities in Abu Dhabi, and charities in other emirates that operate outside of their "home" emirate). It was very apparent from the meeting between Ambassador and al-Roumi that the MSA is not actively involved in regulating charities with a mind toward preventing diversion of funds to terrorist activities or organizations. See Ref A for a description of the UAE's emirate-level charity regulation. End comment.)

¶ 16. (C) Comment: The Central Bank Governor's reaction to the meeting with Ambassador and to the proposal for the 2nd meeting of the JTFCC is markedly different than his demeanor during the first JTFCC meeting on January 24 (ref B). He was friendly and positive. Additionally, he had al-Qemzi follow up that very afternoon to set the time and reach out to the various invitees. Embassy is optimistic that the April 30 JTFCC will be more of a two-way dialogue than the first meeting. This more positive engagement may be the silver lining to the Dubai Ports World ordeal. It is likely that the Governor recognizes that the UAE's cooperation with the United States continues to be under intense scrutiny, and that he must be a cooperative partner in initiatives such as the JTFCC. He, and the UAEG, may be more willing to be forward-leaning in light of this scrutiny. End comment.

¶ 17. (C) Action request for EB/ESC/TFS. Embassy would like to pass the interagency-approved papers on charities and cash couriers to the Central Bank and relevant ministry officials in advance of the JTFCC. Passing the paper prior to the meeting will enable the UAE team to prepare a more thorough discussion. Embassy requests EB/ESC/TFS send the charity paper via front channel cable by COB Friday, April 14. If there will be a cash courier paper to pass to the UAEG before the JTFCC, please pass it to the Embassy as soon as possible. End action request.

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